

February 11, 2026

The Honorable Jeff Reichman, Chair
The Honorable Catelin Drey
The Honorable Dan Zumbach
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

RE: Supporting SSB 3104

Dear Chair Reichman and Senators Drey and Zumbach:

USTelecom – The Broadband Association (“USTelecom”)¹ and its members, America’s innovative broadband providers, are committed to delivering resilient and reliable broadband internet service to their hundreds of thousands of Iowa consumers. The broadband industry has invested more than \$2.2 trillion² in network infrastructure throughout the country since 1996—with approximately \$89.6 billion invested in 2024 alone—and USTelecom members are among the country’s top investors. We support SSB 3104, because it will address the surge of copper theft and vandalism facing our members and the communities they serve.

USTelecom members build and maintain networks that support every sector of the economy from healthcare and public safety to energy, transportation, and education. But the growing threat of copper theft and vandalism is leading to daily network disruptions that impact a significant number of Iowa consumers and result in expensive repairs. The rising cost of copper incentivizes bad actors to target communications lines with the goal of selling the copper to scrap metal dealers. Since the demand for copper is growing faster than supply, scrap metal dealers are more likely to accept it without confirming its origin in times of high demand. In the search for copper, fiber-optic networks and other critical infrastructure can also become collateral damage, draining providers of resources that could otherwise be directed toward broadband deployment.³

The most effective way to combat this problem is collaboration across all sectors from law enforcement and government to business and community leaders to disrupt this illicit market and ensure stronger enforcement against bad actors. SSB 3104 embraces this approach by requiring scrap metal dealers to maintain a confidential register of all transactions and make it available to law enforcement. Furthermore, a person will not be able to sell copper to a scrap metal dealer without obtaining a permit

¹ USTelecom is the premier trade association representing service providers and suppliers for the communications industry. USTelecom members provide a full array of services, including broadband, voice, data, and video over wireline and wireless networks. Its diverse membership ranges from international publicly traded corporations to local and regional companies and cooperatives, serving consumers and businesses in every corner of the country.

² USTelecom, 2024 Broadband Capex Report, October 21, 2025; available at: www.ustelecom.org/research/2024-broadband-capex-report

³ USTelecom, NCTA, CTIA, NTCA, WIA, ACA, “Protecting Critical Communications Infrastructure Report,” Fall 2025; available at <https://ustelecom.org/research/protecting-critical-communication-infrastructure-report-fall-2025>

from the sheriff of the county in which the person resides. These measures in addition to enhanced felony penalties against offenders will help weaken copper theft operations across the board.

For the reasons, USTelecom urges you to advance SSB 3104.

Sincerely,

/s/ B. Lynn Follansbee

B. Lynn Follansbee
Vice President, Strategic Initiatives & Partnerships
USTelecom—The Broadband Association